

Thoughts on Animas River Project and Community Involvement

1-4-10

- The Animas River Stakeholder Group is key; continue to communicate regularly and often with members. I suggest you run any new ideas or outreach efforts by them first, and ideally have their blessing before doing anything proactive with the community. If the stakeholder group is willing to explore the option of a listing, ask what ideas they have for engaging the community (I'm guessing many community members are not aware of the group's hard work and success and some may not have felt there was reason for them to be involved or were even intimidated at the thought of attending a meeting). Perhaps the stakeholder group would consider hosting an informal open house /poster session to help community members learn about the progress made and challenges that remain? Stakeholders could offer table "stations" to answer questions. Or, weather permitting, see if the group would host a public tour of the areas of concern (with help from EPA).
- If the stakeholder group is not willing to bless EPA's efforts to consider listing, at least get their suggestions and keep communications as strong as possible with them.
- Avoid for now any large public meetings that might encourage locals to take positions early on. Keep communications more informal and friendly; conduct meetings in informal locations that keep everyone on even ground (as opposed to an auditorium or hearing room that puts regulators on a stage). Keep communications non-confrontational.
- Consider ramping up individual and informal group meetings to get input
 - Host 2 or 3 informal input sessions in easily accessible public locations (i.e. library, senior center, municipal building or maybe a coffee shop)
 - Would it help our hinder to attempt individual meetings with elected officials?
 - Consider individual "input" meetings with opinion leaders (heads of community groups, school officials, business/ mining leaders and concerned citizens, etc.). I doubt it would be productive to attempt a meeting with Hennis.
- Consider circulating a fact sheet that answers basic questions about EPA's goals and Superfund.
- Continue to brief the local newspaper.
- Create a contact/ mailing list but consider using email for any future notifications and to provide periodic email updates (does the stakeholder group have a list on which to build?).